

A Brief History of the DAFFODIL 400 Project

The **DAFFODIL 400** project began in 2019 when then-president Pat Lenz read an article in *New Hampshire Home* magazine about a similar project undertaken by the Dunbarton, NH Garden Club. She formed a subcommittee of Great Island Garden Club members who made recommendations on planting locations, how to structure a sale, and which varieties to offer.

The bulb sale kicked off via the Garden Club website in the summer of 2020 and continued during the summers of 2021 and 2022. Hopefully, by the actual 400th anniversary celebration in 2023, every yard, garden, and public space would be awash with color.

In addition to selling bulbs to New Castle residents, the Club purchased and planted bulbs around town to help kick off the project: at the Causeway entrance to the island, at the Great Island Common entrance, in the Rec Center and Library gardens, at the Police and Fire Station entrance, and at the Town Landing near the Coast Guard Station.

Thirteen varieties of daffodil bulbs were offered over the 3-year period. Companion bulbs, such as grape hyacinth and allium bulbs, were also sold.

Here are the totals:

2020: 3,200 daffodil bulbs and 1,450 companion bulbs

2021: 1,900 daffodil bulbs

2022: 1,100 daffodil bulbs and 300 companion bulbs

Total: 6,200 daffodil bulbs and 1,750 companion bulbs

Grand Total: 7,950 bulbs

Why daffodils? Daffodils signify rebirth and new beginnings. Thus, they appropriately honor our last 400 years and look ahead to the next 400. More practically, daffodils are hardy, deer-resistant, and quick to multiply.

The daffodil bulbs were chosen to have a variety of bloom dates throughout April. Drive through New Castle during the 'peak' bloom in mid to late April to see thousands of bright yellow, white, and orange daffodils in bloom. It is quite a sight!